

## Facts For the People.

BY S. H. BASHOR.  
NUMBER THREE.

As has been stated the first work of the Progressive element, of the United church, was that of the pioneer. So much rubbish had accumulated, so much wild growth had spread over the ground, and so many fruitless trees had been planted by the eldership and annual meeting manipulations, that the broadax, the fire brand, and the sturdy destructive strength of the pioneers, were required to restore the vineyard and place it in right conditions for tillage. Believing that the work of destruction must be carried on, and that the saw, the broadax the maul, the wedge, and the grubbinghoe were better suited to the consummation of their object than the delicate blade of the pruning knife and razor, the work of destruction was begun. There was a settled conviction that the demands of the times were imperative; that the formalistic tendency, of the invariable action of the Bishopric and general conference, was destructive of the spiritual life and vitality of the church. The smothering fear, engendered by the general conference suggesting rules, and customs outside the limits of Gospel teaching, burst into a destructive blaze when that body boldly hoisted its decisions into the Atmosphere of absolute legislation, and shook them over the heads of the hesitating as absolute hulls of expulsion. These enactments were attacked by Progressives separately, and collectively, with all instruments and from all sides. What the advocates of conference power lacked in brains and arguments they amply supplied with legislation and partisan cunning. The Brethren at work published by Moore and Eshelman, the *Primitive Christian* by Quinter and Brumbaugh, and the *Gospel Preacher* by R. H. Miller and others conceiving themselves to be, to a certain extent, the guardians of the "general brotherhood," each having a College to foster, and each deeming itself the organ of the church, was forced to tacitly remain silent or positively maintain the dignity and infallibility of the conference. The *Progressive Christian*, published by Holsinger and Beer, not considering itself a church organ and having no aspirations in that direction, being published as a distinctively individual enterprise, threw its columns wide open for the expression of individual opinion, upon all subjects agitating the church. Not, as has been stated, considering itself a church organ it consistently hoisted the colors of free discussion, and soon became the organ of the oppressed and discontented throughout the brotherhood. Each man antagonized the corruptions and anti-gospel features of the Eldership and Annual conference with the most effective arguments and weapons at command; and as long as they remained in the limits of decency and dignity the editors gave them free space in which to be heard. The dress question, with all its good and bad features, was freely discussed. The arrogated authority of Annual conference, the general retrogressive spirit of the ruling power, the expulsion of members from the church without Gospel authority or intelligent cause, the corrupt methods of ruling, Bishops and committees, the making as tests of official standing and membership, elements of mere custom and usage, with a hundred other things of like character, which were sapping the very life of the church, and destroying almost every thing in it but the squeak of machinery, came in for their full share of attention.

The editors of other Journals, finding themselves, for want of sympathy, ability or argument, unable to silence the Progressive staff, either rested upon their oars with a mild whining protest, began the rabble inspiring cry of, "stop thief," or appealed to the prejudice of the masses for sympathy and support. The ruling power of the church, which rested in from one to three time worn elders in each substate district, began to set afloat methods among themselves by which their power could be held and the Progressives destroyed. To this end charges were concocted against correspondents for the *Progressive Christian*, its editors and friends, and a general expelling spirit cherished. Their characters were besmirched and when church trials were held, the right of a free,

open, full defense, and trial was denied and the less brains and wisdom the council had the larger and harder the vote. Argument was answered with abuse and legislative thumbscrews, and pleading for Gospel and republican fairness, with coercion and expulsion. Worst and Mason seeing the drift of the current, and being unwillingly confided in by the elder power as to its proposed methods of dealing with the Progressive, its editors and advocates, revolting and indignant at the proposed onslaught, quietly or actively extended their aid and sympathy the other way. The ropes were laid, but at last the crash came, the work of expulsion began, and the duty of reorganizing the church upon a pure Gospel basis stared us in the face. Hitherto only one object had impelled us. "Destroy the man power, the traditionalary environments, and the abuses of the church by whatever honorable instrument or force of argument at command." No other thought had time to enter. No idea of the final result for the time penetrated the Progressive brain. And when it did come, and the imminent and gigantic wrath of the Annual meeting, hacked by the, to it, potent hot blood and vindictiveness of its unthinking friends. The Progressives stood shocked and dazed by the force of the onslaught. But the inevitable had at last, and almost without warning come, and nothing but disintegration and the loss of years of labor, would, or could, result without reorganization.

This was begun at Ashland in the spring of '82 and completed at Dayton, in the spring of '83. One entire year given to the careful and considerate contemplation of this work, revealed no new ordinance or doctrine to introduce, nor no old one to eliminate, modify, or enlarge. Beyond the change from custom to Gospel, and Gospel methods of ceremonial observance, and from formalistic to piety and spiritualistic life no deviation was deemed expedient.

The reorganization was effected and the great work of building upon the renovated foundation was thought to be begun. The character of the *Progressive Christian* was now changed by the unanimous action of the Convention, from a "Free Rostrum" to the Brethren church organ. In this action of the Convention its mission was turned from that of the Pioneer with his broadax, and fire brand, to that of the carpenter and builder with his hammer and plane. Just here is where the one and only damaging mistake of our methods was made. We had become so accustomed to the din of battle, and so vindictive and pugnacious, that we set up the dead carcass of the enemy and riddled it with shot and shell, long after it was stark and cold. We were too full of fight to lay down our arms of attack and destruction, and take up the machinery of cultivation and the implements of building, instead of pleading for our doctrine, our church, our home, and calling all men into the fold to enjoy the quiet and peace, we still hurled our invectives and expended our strength upon the grim shadow of the receding past. Our enemies, wiser than we, dropped the war cry, and in their church organ treated us as though we were not. Dissatisfied members read their paper, and saw in its columns the spirit of silence and peace. In ours they saw correspondence each week filled with the spirit of war and strife. Complaint and bitterness at the discourtesy and underhand legislative activity of the other church inspired the feeling that, after all, perhaps we were only a set of chronic grumblers and pugilistic fault-finders and malcontents. This feeling was fostered by a class of oil tongued elders and preachers who saw an advantage and took it, and as a result the weak kneed and faltering brother's aroused conscience was smothered and he stuck to the "Old church," whose paper was peace even if its traditions were a "little hard to bear." But we, we kept on making charges, and disputing claims they disdained to deny. We complained at their silence, and roundly berated when they refused to hear. Every recruit from their ranks had the same old, old, story to tell through our paper and told it. It was the same thing in substance over, and over, and over again, and new to none save the writer himself. The strings were thumbed till all wearied of the tune. Then, when a decent minded preacher or member of that church treated us with the common civi-

ties of life, we forthwith rushed into print, and fairly sloped over with fawning, praise, and fulsome flattery; and so it transpired that some of their shrewder subjects, took our paper to laugh at, and use as an effective weapon in the campaign against us. Then it dawned upon them that the proper way to utterly defeat us was to make common warfare against the character of our Clergy, and the spirit of our paper, in their private conversation and association. Not only was this done among their own members but among all others who would lend a willing ear. Our growing members were under-estimated, and our doctrinal claims and practices denied. Hardly a single preacher among our number was not in some way tainted in reputation by their insinuations. And all members and preachers, were reputed as railers and disturbers, of religious peace and our paper cited to prove it. Nor was this all.

(To be continued next week.)

## Overfed.

BY W. J. H. BAUMAN.

Brother John Culp, is in the Grain and Milling business in Warrensburg Mo. I am writing in his office. He said, "write a piece for the paper." We were just talking about the religious Orator of this country. Brother John says, the people are overfed, having so much preaching. I differ with him, believing that the trouble lies not in being overfed with Gospel truth, but in not being genuinely converted. To the natural man spiritual things are foolishness, but to the converted they constitute an everlasting feast, and they cannot be overfed. Why just think! How could men enjoy that place about which we sing.

"Where congregations ne'er break up,  
And Sabbaths ne'er end."

Overfed? No indeed, unless it be with something perishable such as human tradition, sectarian wrangling, or something of that nature. The flesh becomes weak and tired, true spirituality never. Whenever I see what seem to be religious dyspeptics, I conclude that they, instead of having been overcrowded with unadulterated spiritual food, have been feeding upon unwholesome diet,—diet which weakens rather than strengthens. To the truly spiritual the poet's sentiment is true.

"We drink, and drink, and drink again,  
And yet we still are dry."

I believe it, because heaven means constant bliss, eternal feasting upon the rich, strengthening and delicious diet of immortal felicity. The more we feed upon the rich, soul-strengthening and joy-producing spiritual viands of the Lord's table, the more hungry we become, not with hunger that brings pain and starvation, but with the hunger of the soul which always expects that "Still there is more to follow." That hunger which believes in progress now, and hereafter—which believes that

"When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise  
Than when we first begun."

My brother and sister, whenever you feel that you are overfed spiritually, rest assured that you have either been feasting upon unwholesome, perishable food, or that spiritual declension has set in. People feel overfed because they are "carnal—sold under sin." Paul's charge is, "Preach the word in season and out of season." The reason he assigns is "for men will not endure sound doctrine."

If Jesus Christ had waited till a sinful world would have volunteered an invitation for him to come and save it, He would never have come. So if the preacher waits till those who don't relish spiritual food volunteer an invitation he will have little opportunity to deliver his Godgiven message.

True Christianity is aggressive. "Go," is the command. Men seem to think they are overfed when they are actually starving. Dyspeptics are imaginary. The best cure for Dyspepsia is wholesome diet judiciously partaken of. When men can only be interested by preaching, of a novel or ludicrous character it is evident that their spiritual digestion is impaired. They stand in need of Holy Ghost cleansing. Such people should be brought down on their knees in humble begging for the bread of life.

Brother Culp and I don't differ so much after all, men only have their peculiar way of expressing themselves. As long as "Brethren" preachers are true to their motto, "The Gospel, the whole Gospel, and nothing but the Gospel," they will never overfeed the truly spiritual, and who are not such, must be preached to whether they relish it or not. It is the ministers duty to create hunger, for "Faith cometh by hearing."

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